

There was no objection.

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SALUTING THE HOUSTON ASTROS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I know that we have spent the day on some very serious and very important issues.

Coming from Houston, Texas, however, I wanted to salute my team, even as they make their way to St. Louis to begin their journey and their trek that we hope will be a successful run at the World Series. The Houston Astros have given us a good run this season. It is not over. We had a challenging game last evening.

But I thought it was always appropriate to thank a team when it is on its way to making good. The Astros have played their hearts out. To Drayton McLane and family and to the Astros and their leadership, their coaches, their corporate office and all of the players and their families and all of the Houston fans, hold on and be strong.

Because we know that a good run and a strong play and the right kind of spirit will give us the opportunity to look down at Wednesday and Thursday for a better day. So thank you, Astros, for a season already done. And we look forward to a new day on Wednesday and Thursday.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted, "aye" on rollcall vote 521, "aye" on rollcall vote 522 and "aye" on rollcall vote 523.

IRAQI ELECTIONS

(Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my enthusiasm about what the future holds for Iraq's women. This past weekend marked yet another courageous showing of women who are eager to live in a democracy, first in Afghanistan and now in Iraq.

The message is very, very clear that these individuals are ready, willing, and able to vote for a change. President Bush stated that our fight in Iraq includes promoting the rights of women everywhere. This fight is a very important one. Our society proves that when women are given the same rights and opportunities as men, the entire nation benefits greatly.

The constitutional referendum specifies equality regardless of sex and actually reserves 25 percent of the national assembly for women. Because of this provision, for the first time in Iraq's

history, women will have a voice in their country.

Currently, two-thirds of all Iraqi women are illiterate. Since our presence in Iraq, 2,400 schools have been renovated, 3,000 teachers trained. And this is resulting in 2 million girls back in school.

The progress that has been made for the women of Iraq is exceptional. During Saddam Hussein's reign, women were imprisoned, tortured and raped; and their attackers faced no recourse. There was no justice under this dictator of terror.

Today, injustice no longer is the rule. Iraqi women will no longer have to fear the terribly cruelty of their past because they will have control of their future.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DENT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME FROM IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I did not see any purple fingers in this Chamber so far this week. We all remember how the Iraqi elections in January were hailed by the President's supporters as the turning point in Iraq.

Well, now there has been another election, a referendum on the Constitution. And what we are hearing from the pro-war forces is that we are still in for a long and deadly occupation in Iraq.

It was all going to be so simple, remember? We would march into Baghdad and depose Saddam Hussein. The grateful Iraqis would embrace the American presence, and a glorious democracy would spontaneously bloom. The Iraq situation was often compared to Germany and Japan after World War II where we were able to quickly fashion functioning democracy.

The New York Times cites Richard Armitage, Bush's former deputy Sec-

retary of State, who notes that those were homogeneous societies, whereas Iraq is a patchwork of rival ethnic groups. Armitage also points out that Germany and Japan, in 1945, were cowed populations, exhausted and deeply shocked by the war.

Iraqis, however, were unshocked and unawed. They simply want their country back. So 2½ years and 2,000 body bags later, we are spinning our wheels and the President who drove us into this ditch in the first place has no plan for getting us out.

Instead, according to a New York Times article on Monday, he seems to be preparing us for, and I quote, "a struggle of Cold War proportions." Does that mean we can look forward to a half century of American boots on the ground in Iraq?

One of the President's aids says in the article that this is a struggle of ideologies that is not going to end with one election or one constitution, or even a string of elections. Is this what the American people signed up for, a titanic ideological struggle with no end in sight? No, they were told Saddam Hussein had to be removed because he had deadly weapons pointed at American cities.

As he has repeated over the last few years, the President is mixing apples and oranges. The President is saying that there is a threat of Islamic terrorism which is real and must be addressed, and that is true. Though I would argue we need to use more diplomatic and fewer military tools in that struggle.

Then there is the war in Iraq, which is and was not a country of Islamic terrorists until we actually invaded that area and actually inflamed Muslim extremists and served as a recruiting tool for al Qaeda.

In a twisted way it turns out that the Bush administration was right. You cannot separate Iraq from the war on terrorism. What they did not tell us is that invading Iraq has helped the wrong side of the war on terrorism.

That same Times article quotes Kenneth Pollack, a scholar who initially supported the Iraq invasion. Pollack now says, and I quote him, "The theory that democracy is the antidote to insurgency gets disproven on the ground every day."

So if we cannot defeat the insurgents by continuing to hold elections, what can we do? There is only one answer. We can take away the one thing that animates the insurgency in the first place, that is, our perceived military occupation of Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I traveled to Iraq a few weeks ago to meet with our military and to learn more about their mission. I cannot tell you how impressed I was with their courage, their loyalty, their intelligence. From the officers down to the citizen soldiers of the National Guard, they are indeed the best America has to offer.

Unfortunately, they have been let down by their civilian superiors who